

# *The Character Quarterly*

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*"The strength of a  
country lies in the  
true sense of loyalty it  
can arouse in the  
hearts of its people."*

*~Louis C. Gerstein*



## Club Character

*By Midn 2/C Jared Wilhelm*

When you hear the words “Navy Sports,” what images first come to mind? Across the nation, most people would respond with some sort of reference to cold December Saturdays in Philadelphia and the famed Army-Navy football games. Others might think of boats cutting across the water with their blue and gold sails waving in the wind on a summer afternoon.

Add a single word into the phrase, though, and things change dramatically: what do you think of when you hear “Navy Club Sports?” Do you picture scrappy boxers under the lights in Halsey Fieldhouse, fighting blood, pain and each other? Rugby players of both sexes battling against other colleges on sunny afternoons at hospital point? Or

*“Upon the fields of friendly strife are sown the seeds that on other days and on other fields will reap the fruits of victory.”  
~Douglas MacArthur*

maybe the hard-hitting ice hockey action serving as weekend entertainment in Dahlgren Hall, complimented best by pepperoni pizza and soda?

With sixteen sports clubs offered to midshipmen, the oft-overlooked club sports program encourages leadership and builds character long before a player steps onto the field, the ring, or the court.

Varsity sports are USNA’s moneymaker; with a large athletic department staff, Navy can recruit and maintain competitive teams at

the NCAA Division I level. However, Brigade intramurals at USNA might be sport in its purest form: athletes giving their all as they play for company or personal pride, often with little reward or fanfare.

Club sports are a whole different animal. They are run by the Director of Club Sports, Associate Professor Jan B. Dainard. Funded not by the athletic department but the Midshipman Welfare fund, clubs have limited travel and equipment budgets, making it more difficult to maintain coaching staffs and diverse schedules. But this is what makes that club sport experience inimitable: club sports could not thrive without passionate and resourceful involvement from volunteer Officer and Senior Enlisted Representatives, coaches, and, of course, the upperclassmen on the team who fulfill leadership roles to fill in gaps that a lack of funds have created and make the most of their resources.

Most clubs are organized by a staff of first and second class midshipmen who are in charge of everything from balancing the club’s checkbook to booking hotels and transportation. With this burden eliminated from varsity programs, players are better able to focus on team unity and their performance on the field. Club sports officers have to be concerned about acquiring and cataloging equipment and uniforms, making sure that move-



ment orders are scheduled and approved, and even arranging special events like banquets and special ceremonies like “Senior Night.”

But the unique challenges created by club sports are not merely administrative duties—team captains must also balance practice and training time with concurrent midshipman duties that varsity teams are exempt from: Saturday morning training evolutions for plebes, marching practices and drill parades, and the lack of team tables for convenience meals. These challenges might seem like time-consuming roadblocks, but after a four year membership on any given sports club, it is not uncommon for midshipmen to feel that the skills they attained and the relationships they built through the club are the most memorable and important of their USNA careers.

The Commandant of Midshipmen, Colonel John Allen, USMC, devotes a portion of his “Commandant’s Intent” to the important role of sports in the development of midshipman by focusing on a famous Douglas MacArthur quote: “Upon the fields of friendly strife are sown the seeds that on other days and on other fields will reap the fruits of victory.” (Continued on page 3)

## Altruism in Athletes

*By Midn 2/C Alexa Forsyth*

The idea of a varsity crew team normally conjures up images of masochists working out at the crack of dawn, people who have very little time for a social life or anything else. Hence the classic crew team shirt that says, "I can't; I have crew". Crew athletes are fine with doing that, and most of them would probably agree to the stereotypes that are generated about the team. However, the Navy women's crew team turned a few heads when they decided to get out of their boats and help out community service Project B.I.G. (Books for International Goodwill) one Saturday after practice.

Project B.I.G. supplies books to third world countries that have low literacy rates and a severe need for new reading material. Volunteers help by sorting and packaging books to send overseas. The goal is that by providing interesting material for the population to read, literacy will improve and create more educational opportunities for citizens.

Midshipman 3/C Wark has been involved with Project B.I.G. through the Midshipman Action Group (MAG) since her plebe year. "As soon as crew went into season, I wasn't able to help out with MAG as much as I wanted to. So, I thought that it would be a great idea to get the girls on the team to help out with the project." Team Captain, 1/C Harvey agreed, and suggested it to the girls. The girls responded enthusiastically, and so one morning after a two-hour workout, the entire varsity team

donned Navy sweatshirts and camouflage utility pants and set out for what they thought would be an easy afternoon of sorting books.

The team drove to a library in Baltimore that was being torn down. They began by separating and packaging reading material. However, one of the Project B.I.G. workers noticed that he had about 20 young, able-bodied athletes and promptly changed their duty. Because the library was being demolished, Project B.I.G. was also salvaging tables, chairs, bookshelves, filing cabinets—anything and everything not nailed to the floor. These items would be sent along with the books themselves to help the countries house the books. It soon became the team's responsibility to move all of this furniture down two flights of stairs and out to the trucks.

"He teased us about getting tired after two and a half hours of lifting these heavy objects," said Wark. "He didn't realize we were already tired and sore from the morning workout." The girls continued to remove furniture from the building for another two hours until the job was complete.

We are no longer a country at ease during a time of peace, which sometimes causes feelings of doubt and worry between civilians and military personnel. It is important that midshipmen do their part to integrate with the community and show the surrounding civilians that we care about more than just our own interests.

Midshipmen on Varsity teams are more than just athletes. They are hard working men and women who have to juggle their time better than a Ringling Brothers act. The women's crew team puts in long hours to improve their physical performance. It takes

dedication and heart to persist day after day with intense, challenging workouts and few rewards other than personal satisfaction. However, the women of the varsity crew team do not simply live and breathe to row: they also care about participating in the community. The day was yet another chance to improve team unity and to expose them to the needs of those less fortunate than themselves. Helping Project B.I.G. was part of an understanding on their part that midshipmen are not just athletes, but they also have a commitment to professional development as well.

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## Club Character (Cont'd)

All athletes— varsity, club or intramural— pour their time and complete effort into their games and practices. This is no different for club athletes— the lessons learned on the "fields of strife" are paramount. But the path of a club sport athlete is different: their names will never grace the pages of Sports Illustrated. They won't play in front of a national audience. While not at the varsity level, the thrill and satisfaction of intercollegiate competition is an experience very difficult to replicate through any other means. When combined with the "bonus" experiences of countless hours working off the field, such as planning and coordinating, interacting and negotiating, leading games or matches means even more to each participant. This culmination of character and leadership skills, built in such a distinctive manner, is unparalleled across the yard and will long remain not only a critical part of the education of club athletes, but also the general atmosphere and spirit of the Brigade to which club athletics contribute.

## The 2003 Leadership Conference

*By Midn 1/C Anne Gibbon*

On January 15-17, 2003, college students from across the nation, military and civilian alike, gathered at the Naval Academy for the 2003 Leadership Conference. Fourteen civilian schools and five service

*"The Academy has this incredible vibe of pride in who they are and what they represent. It's amazing."*

*~Dominique Ramirez, Duke University*

academies were represented at the conference. The theme of this year's conference was "Building and Leading Teams", emphasizing an incorporated effort across the spectrum of academia, business, government, and military leadership to develop teamwork and success. The diversity of attendees, as well as the exceptional quality of speakers invited, spurred an exchange of ideas and information on leadership that would not have been possible without the generous contributions from the Class of 1938, as well as Mr. and Mrs. Hart, USNA Class of 1956.

Not only were the speakers diverse and knowledgeable on a range of ideas, but many Academy graduates were also in attendance to share their wealth of experience and the occasional sea story. Rear Admiral Rindskopf, USN (Ret.) represents the class of 1938, as their Class President. He molded his own skills of leadership during WWII as a submarine skipper. He spoke of the challenge to command a crew

where half were new arrivals to a submarine. "I learned quickly that technical expertise, coolness under fire, consideration for the well-being of every man, and total concentration on the job at hand did build a team that responded to my leadership." His classmate, Rear Admiral McNitt, USN (Ret.) was also in attendance at the conference. He used LCDR Fluckey, USN, a submarine skipper in WWII, as an example of a leader who was able to

effect dramatic change in his crew by demonstrating to a dispirited crew that he was a bold and caring leader. RADM McNitt, himself

a former Superintendent of the Naval Postgraduate School and well as a former U.S. Naval Academy Dean of Admissions, made himself available throughout the conference for advice and inspiration to those midshipmen about to join their ranks as officers of the line. The Class Secretary of 1938, Captain Ela, USN (Ret.) spoke of his experience in military and civilian life in the field of developmental

me informed of problems, and failure in either case will see you ordered out of here in 24 hours," Captain Ela distilled into the catch words of crystal clear, unambiguous, and motivational. RADM Rindskopf's last words to those at the conference exemplified why his classmates and the Harts annually sponsor the Leadership Conference and consider it such an important event, "You are poised to become leaders in the military and civilian milieu in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. We, the gray ones in the front row, envy you."

Through the generous funding of the Harts and the Class of 1938, the 2003 Leadership Conference hosted many great speakers. One of which was Rodrigo Jordan, a successful mountain climber and businessman. He has conquered some of the tallest mountains in the world, including Mt. Everest and K-2. His experience in the most adverse elements the world has to offer relate to the environment of the military that the cadets and midshipmen he spoke to will be thrust into in a few short months. Jordan emphasized learning from your mistakes. He said, "Good leaders will never be

*"I was very impressed with all the Academy students I met. They were respectful, intelligent, proud of what they represent, and dedicated."*

*~Brigitte Zimmerman, Stanford*

engineering and engineering management. His words on building a project from the ground up using a nucleus of experts and expanding to build a larger structure of support directly affected each student in attendance. An order from one of his superiors, "Keep on the move, out of your chair, keep

good unless they fail." And in failing, there are always critics to document a fall. Jordan's advice was to not take counsel of your naysayers, but rather develop a positive attitude, even in the tough times, and to learn from your mistakes and move on. While the conditions that Jordan and his team



climbed through were dangerous and pushed their physical limits, he emphasized making their goal known to each member and made sure each of them were motivated by it. In that way, they all had a common commitment and equally sacrificed their personal needs to the goals of the team. At the end of his lecture, the students and faculty present walked away with a different perspective on leadership and a renewed appreciation for the challenge of his sport.

One of the most dynamic speakers of the week was Marcus Buckingham, the Vice President of the Gallup Organization. He has written numerous books on leadership and practical ways to increase the effectiveness of a group's production. Buckingham believes employee retention and employee happiness are the keys to an organization's success. His speech immediately appealed to the civilians in the group as well as the midshipmen and cadets because of the dynamic nature of his presentation, most especially the maxim he began with, "First, break all the rules." While focusing on the questions to use to evaluate subordinates' level of motivation and happiness, the underlying theme was an admonishment to first focus on a person's strength and then manage around weaknesses. Through Buckingham's presentation, his audience was able to see the harm that can come through

constant harping on a person's weakness, and eventually, the negativism that can come to pervade the organization. He stressed the importance of actively providing subordinates with an environment in which they can produce their best work and providing feedback for them. Buckingham's presentation brought a fresh perspective on small unit leadership, a topic critical to all midshipmen.

Putting on the Leadership Conference became a managerial challenge in itself. The many officers and midshipmen responsible for



putting on the conference, as well as those who sponsored it, deserve congratulations for their efforts. The wide range of speakers stimulated conversations amongst the students; their civilian and military perspectives further enhanced the discussions. The 2003 Leadership Conferences was just one of the many opportunities the Academy provides to its midshipmen who desire to represent their country and service with honor upon commissioning.



### **Get Involved with the 2004 Leadership Conference!**

#### **Attention all 2/C Midshipmen:**

**If you want the chance to meet other students from military academies and civilian colleges across the country, if you would like the opportunity to learn from unique and informative experts on leadership, business, and management, you should join the team of the 2004 Leadership Conference. If you have not yet notified your leadership instructor, contact LT Luft [luft@usna.edu](mailto:luft@usna.edu) for further information on how you can contribute.**

## Trusting a Leader

*By Midn 4/C Gregory Coy*

**L**eadership skills come in many shapes and forms; however there are not many situations where they are more necessary than in the role of a Certified Flight Instructor. CFI's need to be able to lead a variety of people through the process of obtaining a pilot's license. The process is long and hard, so persistence and motivation become extremely important. The biggest factor, of course, is trust. It takes a tremendous amount of trust to step into a twenty-four foot Cessna 152 and climb to 4000 feet with a person you have only just met an hour ago. Your life is in your CFI's hands and his job is to train you to become confident enough in yourself to fly the airplane on your own. Gerry Kimak, the instructor that taught me gained my trust early in the process of learning to fly, impressing upon me the importance of that intangible quality in a professional

relationship.

The first way he gained my trust was through his knowledge. He knew everything there was to know about flying in general and everything specific about the airplane he flew. The technical knowledge he possessed led me to immediately believe that he knew what he was doing. In particular, I can remember my first ground school lesson. He asked if I knew the emergency procedure for a failed engine. I told him that I did not because I had not realized I had to study it for that lesson. He told me to write down what he said and he began to rattle off every step of the emergency checklist. When I checked it out later, he had mentioned every step, almost verbatim. In fact he gave more information than was even mentioned in the aircraft manual. Even though emergency checklists are something every pilot must know, seeing that he knew it all so well and could recall it so quickly, made me trust him when I flew with him. Every time we flew there was never a doubt in my mind that I would make it back safely. In fact, I

was always completely relaxed with him at the controls.

Another way that I learned to trust him was through his actions. When doing my preflight checks he wouldn't come along, at least not after he taught me how to do it properly. The fact that he didn't need to look over my shoulder showed that he trusted me. Showing mutual trust is key in a leadership position. His actions in the plane also made me trust him. He would never just tell me how to do something. He would tell me and show me the correct way. He never expected more from me than he expected from himself, another good quality to have in a leadership position. Also, while in the airplane, he would relax and enjoy the ride while I flew, demonstrating mutual trust once again. In addition, if I was performing a maneuver, especially when close to the ground, he would keep his hands off the controls. However, if something started to go wrong he would immediately be there to correct my mistake. Trusting that he would always be ready to help made me more confident in my actions and also made me learn the warning signs before something terrible would happen.

A flight instructor is someone that you need to trust out of necessity. Some of them make it easier than others to do so. My CFI made it extremely easy through his actions and his knowledge. As my CFI led me through my training to earning my private pilot certificate, my ability to trust him played the biggest role. Without that trust, I would never have gotten through my training and I wouldn't be as confident in an airplane as I am today.

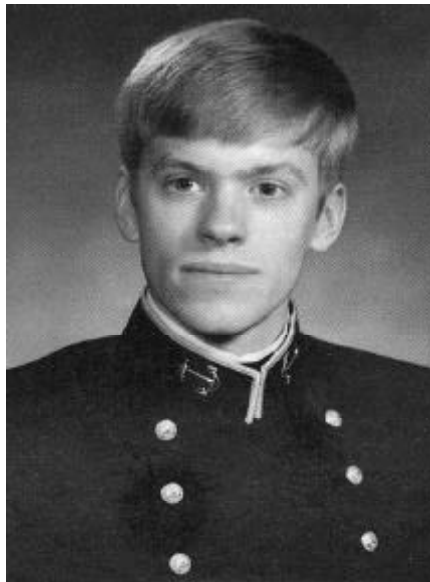


## Remembering CDR Willie McCool, USN

*By Midn 3/C Alex Emmert*

It is hard to imagine anyone who epitomizes the Navy's core values of honor, courage, and commitment more than CDR William McCool, USN, one of the astronauts who died tragically Saturday, February 8, 2003, in the tragic explosion that destroyed the STS-107 Columbia Space Shuttle. McCool displayed great integrity and ability throughout his Naval career, distinguishing himself in many areas, earning the respect of all who knew him.

Born on September 23, 1961, in San Diego, California, to a Naval Aviator, Commander McCool graduated from Coronado High School in Lubbock, Texas in 1979. He received a direct appointment to the U.S. Naval Academy as a member of the class of 1983. During his time at Annapolis, he distinguished himself in all areas of midshipmen life. He was a star distance runner for the cross-country and track teams, serving as the track team captain during his first year. Although he was never the best runner on either team, he earned the respect of his teammates and coaches alike because of his grit and determination. He would run an average of nine miles every day,



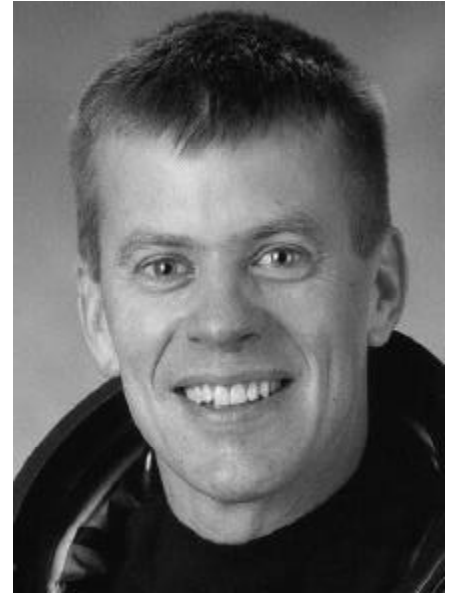
waking up before dawn for a three-mile run, then about six during practice. He is also remembered for the rigid schedule he kept, ensuring that he got no less than eight hours of sleep a night.

Even though so much of his time was devoted to running, McCool still managed to stand out in the classroom, graduating second in his class of 1,083 with a degree in a Computer Science. Professor Michael Parker taught CDR McCool for both semesters of Plebe English and described him as "a gifted student who could excel in any academic endeavor."

After the Naval Academy, McCool went to flight school, earning his wings in August 1986. He was trained in the EA-6B Prowler, specializing in electronic warfare. He made two deployments aboard the USS Coral Sea (CV-43) in the Mediterranean. He was then selected for Test Pilot School, a great

honor for any aviator. Following that schooling, he was assigned to Patuxent River Naval Air Station, where he was a leader in the testing of EA-6Bs and TA-4Js. He then went back to Whidbey Island, Washington in 1996 where he was preparing to deploy on the USS Enterprise (CVN-65) when he heard he had been selected by NASA to participate in the astronaut program.

CDR McCool received his space shuttle flight qualification after two years of training.



Subsequently, he worked in the technical administration of NASA. After many years preparing for space flight, he was chosen to pilot the STS-107 for its February 2003 flight.

Although CDR McCool accomplished many great things over the course of his life, they are not a full reflection of his person. He was a loving husband and father. He was an avid outdoorsman, enjoying mountain biking and camping, and a skilled guitar player. Everyone who knew him remembers him as a friendly, selfless person who was willing to use his gifts to help those around him. Professor Parker, remembering the young plebe he knew in 1979, described him as a person who "glowed."

CDR McCool represents everything midshipmen should strive to be. He was a driven midshipman who worked hard to achieve all his goals, excelling in every area of Naval Academy life. Despite his achievements, he was a humble, selfless man. His tragic death is mourned by all and is a great loss to the Naval Service.



## Meeting Tim Russert of “Meet the Press”

*By Midn 3/C Pete Manzoli*

As I waited at the top of the stairs in Alumni Hall, hoping to get a chance to thank Mr. Russert for his insightful words, I felt a pat on the back and there was Mr. Russert himself, searching for the gold lettering of my name so that he might address me personally. “Mr. Manzoli, how are you doing this evening?”, he said warmly as he extended his hand, “Good Italian name.” I thanked him and he moved on to the other throngs of guests and anxious midshipmen. However, I continued to think about the attention he paid to me even for that short instant and the consideration he seemed to offer each person whose hand he shook. It did not surprise me that this man was voted the “Father of the Year” by the National Father’s Day Committee in 1995. Unquestionably, he possesses a gift with people. The weekly

Sunday morning television show, called “Meet the Press”, combines Mr. Russert’s personability with people and his extensive political and journalistic experience. The blend of his talents in this format has created the most watched interview program in its timeslot in America.

The Brigade of Midshipmen thoroughly enjoyed Russert’s informed opinions about the possibility of war in the Middle East, changing presidential elections, and facts and anecdotes about the many major political figures Russert has interviewed over the years. Russert’s encounters with key governmental officials and worldwide presence in journalism have earned him much political respect. In 2001, The Washingtonian named Russert the most influential journalist in Washington, D.C. Russert’s notoriety, however, stems from something those of us at the Academy hold onto dearly: a commitment to truth and a loyalty to integrity.

In response to a question by a fourth class midshipman, Russert explained that the objective of his career is to inform the public of the true side of that which he is reporting. Undoubtedly, the character and personal strength exemplified by Mr. Russert as a journalist, political analyst, and father are what continue to augment his success. As the Brigade of Midshipmen filed out of Alumni Hall that night I could only appreciate the genuine personal awareness and concentrated worldly understanding Mr. Russert shared with us all.

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